

The Associated Students of
Montana State University Billings
Student Senate

Senate Resolution – 01

A resolution to show strong opposition to House Bill 525: "An act encouraging intellectual diversity and promoting accountability in higher education."

Be it enacted by the Associated Students of Montana University Billings Student Senate:

Whereas, we the students of Montana State University Billings express our strong opposition to the consideration of House Bill 525: "An act encouraging intellectual diversity and promoting accountability in higher education."

Whereas, the implementation of House Bill 525 is unnecessary on the basis that academic freedom for students is already well preserved on the MSU-Billings campus and the Montana University System.

Whereas, Article X, Section 9 of the Montana Constitution grants governing authority of the Montana University System to the Board of Regents.

Whereas, Policy 302 of the Board of Regents reads: "(b) Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment."

Whereas Policy 302 of the Board of Regents also reads: "(c) College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution."

Whereas, Article II, Section B. Sub-Section 7 of our university policy grants students the "right to study and learn in an atmosphere of academic freedom."

Whereas, Article IV of our university policy grants students the right to file complaints and seek resolution for unfair or biased treatment in the classroom through appeals to the Academic Standards Committee and through the Student Resolution Officer of our student government.

Whereas, academic freedom is not based solely on the students' academic freedom, but the instructors' academic freedom.

Whereas, quality instruction cannot be given to our students with the restriction of free expression in the classroom by both our instructors and our students.

Whereas, all people must receive diversity of opinions in order to formulate or validate their own opinions. The students of the Montana University System are no different.

Whereas, the college community is based entirely on the free exchange of facts, ideas, and opinions, and should not be stifled by any government.

Whereas, we the students of the Montana State University Billings cannot receive a quality education from our instructors if they are unable to teach freely in the classroom.

Whereas, we believe that the legislature should be working to lower the cost of tuition for students of the Montana University System rather than review this non-issue.

Therefore, we strongly oppose House Bill 525 and any other legislation that stifles free expression or any other freedoms granted to the people in the Montana Constitution and the United States Constitution.

Therefore, we strongly urge all other universities in the Montana University System to oppose this legislation.

Therefore we strongly urge the House of Representatives to not pass unneeded legislation and to fail House Bill 525.

*PASSED: Thursday, February 8, 2007
By a Unanimous Vote of the MSU-Billings Student Senate*